

Illinois JTED-SNAP Pilot Project Request for Application

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Services Funds**

**Illinois Partnership of:
Department of Human Services (DHS) and
Department of Commerce and Economic
Opportunity**

Bruce Rauner
Governor

Jim Dimas
Secretary-Designate, IDHS

James M. Schultz
*Director, Department of
Commerce*

JTED-SNAP Pilot Project Request for Application

| | Page Number |
|--|-------------|
| I. General Information | 1 |
| A. Project Goals..... | 1 |
| B. Grantor Agency | 1 |
| C. Funding..... | 1 |
| D. Eligible Respondents and Regions..... | 1 |
| E. Eligible Project Participants | 1 |
| F. Period of Performance | 1 |
| G. Bidder’s Conference | 2 |
| H. Posting of Project Information | 2 |
| I. Notice of Intent to Apply | 2 |
| J. Due Date..... | 2 |
| K. FAQ..... | 2 |
| II. Program Description | 2 |
| A. Background..... | 2 |
| B. Target Locations | 3 |
| C. Targeted Sectors | 3 |
| D. Eligible Applicants | 4 |
| E. Targeted Participants | 4 |
| F. Program Partnership Roles | 5 |
| G. Program Design | 6 |
| H. Program Performance and Evaluation | 11 |
| I. Budget | 12 |
| J. Project Steering Group..... | 12 |
| III. Program Requirements | 13 |
| A. Requirements..... | 13 |
| B. Allowable Costs | 13 |
| C. Project Reporting | 13 |
| D. Pre-Award Survey..... | 13 |
| E. Monitoring – Fiscal and Programmatic..... | 14 |
| IV. Application Requirements..... | 14 |
| A. Submittal of Grant Application | 14 |
| B. Application Format | 15 |
| C. Application Orientation | 15 |
| V. Review and Selection Procedures | 16 |

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Project Goals

The SNAP E&T Pilot, federally funded by the U.S.D.A. Food and Nutrition Service, is testing the development, implementation, and evaluation of projects designed to reduce dependency and increase work efforts for customers in the program. Illinois will use its funding award to pilot the application of a proven employment program - Job Training and Economic Development (JTED) initiative - to SNAP E&T participants. Through the model, the JTED-SNAP pilot will work to address the unmet needs of a large number of underemployed and unemployed SNAP participants in Illinois who need basic and technical skills and work experience (i.e. enhanced on-the-job learning) along with support services to get good jobs, increase earnings, and reduce reliance on public assistance.

B. Grantor Agency

The Department of Commerce in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Service (IDHS) are responsible for the administration of the *“Fiscal Year 2015 Pilot Project to Reduce Dependency and Increase Work Requirements and Work Effort under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)”*.

C. Funding

A total of up to \$19.5 million will be awarded on a competitive basis to Community Based Organizations (CBO) to serve a minimum of 2,500 SNAP recipients in seven targeted regions.

D. Eligible Respondents and Regions

Eligible respondents are CBOs with the capacity to leverage federal and state resources to implement the JTED-SNAP program model. CBOs must have demonstrated success in administering career training and placement programs and have the capacity to run a work experience component including being the “Employer of Record”. The seven regions defined by the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) are targeted for this opportunity and consist of the following counties: Adams, Boone, Brown, Clinton, Cook, DeWitt, Franklin, Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox, Macon, Marshall, Mason, McDonough, McLean, Monroe, Peoria, Perry, Pike, Randolph, Schuyler, St. Clair, Stark, Stephenson, Tazewell, Warren, Washington, Williamson, Winnebago, and Woodford.

E. Eligible Project Participants

Individuals must be a SNAP applicant, recipient, or have entered the pilot project and engaged in services before exiting SNAP. IDHS will refer eligible participants to the appropriate CBO training provider based on a random assignment process. Once referred the participants must be enrolled in the training program.

F. Period of Performance

The estimated project period of performance is currently expected to be January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2017, subject to change. Projects will have at minimum a 3-month training test period followed by the full implementation of the training program and an evaluation period.

G. Bidder's Conference

Bidder's Conferences for potential applicants will be held in Springfield on September 23, 2015 and in Chicago on September 24, 2015. Additional information on the bidder's conference can be found in Section IV. All attendees must pre-register at <http://jted-snap-app-on-site.eventbrite.com>.

H. Posting of Project Information

Project information will be posted at <https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/jted-snap>.

I. Notice of Intent To Apply

Eligible applicants wishing to apply must submit a **non-binding** notification of intent to apply by **October 1, 2015** to JTED-SNAP@illinoisworknet.com. This notification is included as Attachment A and must be completed in full.

J. Due Date

Applications are due **October 28, 2015 by 5:00pm** to JTED-SNAP@illinoisworknet.com. Late submittals will be reviewed at the Departments discretion and are dependent on fund availability after reviewing applications submitted according to the guidelines.

K. FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) can be submitted at the below site. Individual questions by phone will NOT be accepted. https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/partners/JTED-SNAP/Pages/JTED-SNAP_FAQ.aspx

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Background

On August 25, 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service published a Request for Application (RFA) in response to legislation that authorized employment and training (E&T) pilot projects that would develop and test best practices for increasing the number of SNAP participants who obtain employment and increase their income. The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Act), Pub. L. 113-79, amended section 16(h) of the Food and Nutrition Act (FNA), 7 U.S.C. 2025, to authorize funding for this effort.

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) in cooperation with Commerce, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB) submitted and were approved to operate a pilot project that would test a newly designed JTED-SNAP Program. This pilot will take a proven workforce development program operated by Commerce known as Job Training and Economic Development (JTED), enhance the model, and offer it to SNAP recipients. Enhancing the model will create stronger work-based learning opportunities that incorporate adult education bridge programs and career and technical education along with enhanced skill assessments and case management.

As part of a larger National study to develop and test methods for Employment & Training programs, the JTED-SNAP Pilot Project will focus on increasing the number of SNAP work registrants who obtain unsubsidized employment, the earned income of work registrants, and reducing the reliance of work registrants on public assistance. There is a randomized control trial associated with the pilot projects to test a range of innovative and promising approaches and strategies that can be implemented into the existing SNAP

E&T program. USDA Office of Food and Nutrition Services has contracted with a third party evaluator that will conduct the study. Study participants will be randomly assigned to either the SNAP E & T pilot program group and receive the JTED-SNAP services, or assigned to the control group that will receive “business as usual” services consisting of the existing SNAP E & T services currently available or services in the community for which they are eligible. The random assignment will be conducted prior to the program participant referral to the CBOs. CBOs will be responsible for providing data on the participants assessments, training, supportive services, case management, on the job training activities, and permanent job placement and retention. In addition, CBOs are required to cooperate with the evaluators and participate in the evaluation activities such as but not limited to making staff available for interviews, convening focus groups, allowing observation of program operations, reviewing case files on study participants, and providing data on service participation as well as costs associated with program operations.

B. Targeted Locations

The Illinois JTED-SNAP pilot will be conducted in seven Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). LWDAs represent the geographic areas used to deliver Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services in cooperation with adult education, job training, and human services in Illinois and will be integrated as a career pathway for the participants served in the JTED-SNAP pilot project. These seven LWIAs (3, 7, 14, 15, 19, 24, 25), provide a representative cross-section of areas needed for a robust evaluation of the JTED-SNAP program. They have different mixtures of targeted sectors and economic growth, urban and rural mix, and availability of services needed for serving the targeted SNAP populations. The counties represented in these area and included in this study are: Adams, Boone, Brown, Clinton, Cook, DeWitt, Franklin, Fulton, Hancock, Henderson, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox, Macon, Marshall, Mason, McDonough, McLean, Monroe, Peoria, Perry, Pike, Randolph, Schuyler, St. Clair, Stark, Stephenson, Tazewell, Warren, Washington, Williamson, Winnebago, and Woodford. See Attachment B for a map of the targeted regions.

C. Targeted Sectors

Illinois will include 11 of its growth industries along with their demand occupations for the JTED-SNAP pilot. Commerce used the Illinois Department of Employment Security (DES) labor market information, including the IDES statewide and LWIA industry and occupational projections, related information on wages, and education and training requirements to identify these industries and occupations. Nine of the sectors are part of the Illinois Pathways initiatives and the priority of the Illinois Workforce Development Board (IWDB). These are Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)-related sectors: agriculture, architecture and construction, energy, finance, health care, information technology, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and research and development. In addition, the JTED-SNAP pilot project will include hospitality and administrative support as growth industries, given the demonstrated success in the JTED program. Attachment C provides a list of the in demand sectors and occupations identified in your service area. The RFA submitted by CBOs for the JTED-SNAP Pilot Project must correlate with the Illinois Pathways initiative and serve one or more of the eleven in-demand sectors identified through the Pathways initiative or identified as in demand for this project. Additional information on the Illinois Pathways Initiative can be found at the following link: <https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways/Pages/default.aspx>

D. Eligible Applicants

The JTED-SNAP pilot will select a subset of current JTED and SNAP E&T CBOs that have the capacity to leverage federal and state resources to implement the JTED-SNAP program model. It also will select additional CBOs in Illinois including community action agencies with similar capacity in partnerships with community colleges and other adult education providers. CBOs selected must be able to meet the following requirements:

- Have the administrative and fiscal capacity to administer the program according to the Department's requirements and have the capability to be the "EMPLOYER OF RECORD" including the administration of a payroll system for participants placed in work experience.
- Be a not-for-profit organization with a local Board of Directors that directly provides job training services or has established partnerships with training providers.
- Demonstrate a history of serving disadvantaged individuals and low-wage/low-skilled workers including those that are SNAP registrants. Service includes the capacity for career navigation, mentoring, supportive services, and partnerships with other social service organizations for referral and assistance with barrier intervention.
- Show strong employer engagement and local and regional public-private partnerships that links economic development and job training in key high-demand sectors.
- Provide Commerce the eligibility criteria program participants must have in order to participate in the JTED-SNAP services targeted for the selected sector so that once referral is made to the CBO the client is automatically accepted into the training program.
- Must be willing to participate in the SNAP E & T pilot evaluation and not actively recruit or provide services to control group members.
- Must be willing to provide employment related serve to program participants, even if the participant determines at a future date they are not interested in the targeted industry or is placed but loses a job.
- Must have the capacity to leverage other funding sources to support services provided in the pilot project and blend resources for efficiency and sustainability.
- Must be willing to work with other CBO providers on reassignment of program participants if necessary.

E. Targeted Participants

The pilot will serve two targeted populations that are SNAP recipients:

- **Category 1 - Individuals Already Working.** For the JTED-SNAP pilot this category will serve SNAP recipients that are currently working but need training to increase their skill base for career advancement, to earn higher wages and benefits, and/or to obtain higher work hours. Category 1 participants will be defined as:
 - a) Individuals who are gainfully employed and working 30 hours or more per week but still eligible for SNAP benefits and requiring skill upgrades to move up a career pathway and/or achieve higher earnings. This population is considered to be exempt from the SNAP work requirements but elect to volunteer for services offered. No more than 15% of those classified as exempt from the work requirements may be served under this grant.

- b) Individuals working less than 30 hours per week but still eligible for SNAP benefits that are lacking sufficient skills to advance in a career pathway, achieve higher earning, gain more work hours, or transfer to a higher level position. These individuals will meet the work registrant requirement at section 6(d) of the FNA. These individuals cannot be required to engage in more than 120 hours of activities per month which includes hours worked along with other activities such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) and adult basic education.
- **Category 2 – Unemployed/Underemployed Individuals with Low Skills and/or Limited Work Experience.** For the JTED-SNAP pilot, Category 2 participants will be defined as individuals with low skills (without a high school diploma or equivalent and/or lacking the basic and technical skills needed to access entry-level occupations in the targeted sectors) or limited work experience (unemployed or underemployed individuals without continuous, full-time work experience in the last year). These individuals will meet the work registrant requirement at section 6(d) of the FNA and will target Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) but will also serve other SNAP work registrants with barriers to employment.

F. Program Partnership Roles

CBOs must establish partnerships to align services for the SNAP participants. The roles of each primary partner are defined below; however this is not an inclusive list of roles or potential partners. CBOs should establish partnerships with economic development, sector partners, CBOs, and other social service agencies to leverage and align services.

Illinois Department of Human Services

- Marketing, outreach, and recruit SNAP recipients for participation
- Assess SNAP recruitments for appropriate referral
- Collaborate with the local CBOs to engage the SNAP participants in the training services
- Partner with the local CBO career navigator to support engagement and continuation of services and follow up on performance and compliance

Department of Commerce

- Provide technical assistance on program design, program implementation, financial management and monitoring of the program
- Through Illinois workNet provide the data system for all participant tracking from the application to the final close-out of the client service file
- Provide marketing tools for communication to both participants and employers
- Provided standardized assessment for interest, capacity, barriers and industry required baseline entry

Employers

- Work with partners to project long-term and short-term needs and career opportunities and job openings
- Identify/develop and use common standards for defining skill requirements as well as a check list system based on pathway model
- Interview and select trainees completing the required training modules and receiving the required industry credentials
- Providing work-based learning opportunities (On-the-Job (OJTs), customized training, subsidized work experience, internships)
- Develop and retain training completers
- Provide feedback on performance of the system in meeting employer needs
- Reporting progress

Education and Workforce Partners

- Collaborate with partners in establishing career pathway programs of study including bridge programs
- Collaborate with the LWDA on establishing a referral process for the continuation of training services through a designated career pathway
- Develop open entry and open exit bridge programs that establish personalized plans for students and workers and work with them to enter employment or further training
- Collaborate with partners in marketing and outreach to employers
- Collaborate with partners in providing group orientation to students enrolled
- Collaborate with partners including employers in interviewing and selection
- Assist students in developing individual plan and integrate multiple public and private funding sources for students based on these plans
- Provide personalized instruction, instructional support and transition management services for students from bridge programs through training completion
- Provide stackable credentials
- Reporting progress

G. Program Design

Local DHS offices will recruit SNAP recipients and conduct a multi-phase intake process that will:

1. Evaluate SNAP recipients career interest by providing information on career training opportunities available in their region through the JTED-SNAP Pilot Project and test basic skills through the NOTCI 21st Century Skills Assessment provided in Illinois workNet;
2. Discuss eligibility criteria to be enrolled in sector training available in their area;
3. Evaluate barriers to participation;
4. Team evaluation to determine what the “Right Fit” is for the SNAP recipient;
5. Sign consent form to participate in the Pilot Project and be subject to random assignment.

SNAP recipients that complete the intake process will enter a random assignment conducted by Mathematica, a member of the national evaluation team. Recipients will be placed in a core service group (business as usual) or the expanded service group. Individuals assigned to the expanded service group will be referred to the “Right Fit” CBO for JTED-SNAP training services.

CBOs administering the JTED-SNAP Pilot Project will offer career pathway opportunities for the SNAP recipients referred by the local IDHS case managers. SNAP participants referred to the CBO are in the expanded service group and must be immediately engaged and enrolled in the agencies training program. The program design must meet the specific skill needs of the local employer and sector (demand driven). In addition, the program must address the skill deficiencies of the SNAP participants including their barriers to participation and completion of the training and their ability to be placed and/or retained in a position, or enrolled in a higher education opportunity. A career plan must be established to guide the participants through a career pathway based on the modules defined under ***Accelerated and Enhanced Training and Work-Based Learning***.

In FY 2010, an estimated four out of five SNAP households did not include anyone with education beyond high school, while an estimated one-third of households did not even include a high school graduate (National Skills Coalition, 2012). To insure appropriate opportunities are offered to these recipients, priority will be given to programs that offer bridge programs as part of their training design, especially for those that plan to serve Category 2 participants. CBOs will be required to provide in their proposal a program description of the eligibility criteria for participants’ acceptance into the career sector training program(s) that are being proposed. Participants referred to CBOs based on meeting the eligibility criteria must be accepted into the training program. If the CBO plans to offer training in more than one career sector pathway, the pathways

need to be ranked according to preference. Additionally CBOs need to provide a schedule of any proposed training classes, including information on duration of the training, their start dates, whether training will be available as open enrollment sessions or based on a cohort schedule. Forms are included in the Application for completing each of these requirements. CBOs can design their program to serve one or more of the categories of program group members defined below.

- **Category 1 – Employed But Skill/Wage Deficient (Incumbent Workers)**

- a) SNAP Participants who are working 30 hours or more per week but still eligible for SNAP benefits based on low wages and require skill upgrades to move up a career pathway and/or achieve higher earnings. These participants are referred by IDHS to the CBO. CBOs and their education partners will work with local employers to provide employer-driven curriculum and technical training. This training will improve the skill level of the workers, increase their earnings and potential for advancement, as well as increase the productivity of the participating employers. Success of the program is based on job retention and workers' increased earnings over time. The CBOs will be paid based on achieving the negotiated performance measures of enrolled in training, completing training, retention, and wage/benefit increase. Attachment D provides examples of Illinois Career Cluster Model's on how a participant can transition through an integrated career pathway system. Levels four and five of the career cluster "fan" are applicable to this category.
- b) Individuals working less than 30 hours per week but still eligible for SNAP benefits that are lacking sufficient skills to advance in a career pathway, achieve higher earning, gain more work hours, or transfer to a higher level position. These individuals will meet the work registrant requirement at section 6(d) of the FNA and cannot be required to engage in more than 120 hours of activities per month. This includes hours worked along with other activities such as CTE and adult basic education. IDHS will identify eligible clients, provide an assessment of their barriers and suitability, and refer them to the appropriate CBO. CBOs and their education partners will work with the SNAP participants to identify their current skills and credentials and determine what skills or credential are needed to advance or obtain a self-sufficient position in the identified industry. CBOs will collaborate with local employers to provide employer-driven curriculum and technical training. This training will improve the skill levels of the SNAP participants who currently are not working at their full capability and allow them to, increase their earnings, increase the number of hours worked, and/or advance to a higher level position related to the skills acquired. The program will be evaluated on the completion of training and earned credential, gainful employment in a self-sufficient career pathway, and retention. The CBOs will be paid based on achieving the negotiated performance measures of enrolled in training, completing training, employed, and retention. In Attachment D levels three, four, and five of the career cluster "fan" are applicable to this category.

- **Category 2 – Unemployed/Underemployed SNAP Work Registrants.** These individuals will meet the work registrant requirement at section 6(d) of the FNA. These individuals cannot be required to engage in more than 120 hours of activities per month which includes training in bridge programs, CTE and adult basic education and also hour spent in work experience. The SNAP participants targeted will be Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) and other SNAP work registrants that are long term unemployed or significantly underemployed with one or more barriers to employment. IDHS will identify eligible SNAP recipients, provide an assessment of their barriers and suitability, and refer them to the appropriate CBO. CBOs will partner with local community colleges, local employers, social service agencies, industry sector organizations and economic development organizations to provide holistic case management systems to address the needs of the SNAP participants while fulfilling the local workforce demands. CBOs will provide training through developed internal programs or/and in partnerships with community colleges and adult education programs. The CBOs will be paid based on achieving the negotiated performance measures of enrolled in training, completing training, employed, and retention. In Attachment D levels three, four, and

five of the career cluster “fan” are applicable to this category.

Employer Engagement and Public-Private Partnerships for In-Demand Sectors

CBOs will be required to establish partnerships with employers in critical, in-demand industries in cooperation with local and regional economic and community development partners. Employer-led partnerships must be established in advance of receiving JTED-SNAP funding and must include partnership agreements specifying the role of partners including employers and CBOs. *The partnership agreements must be included with the RFA as an attachment.* These up-front employer partnerships and agreements are essential in identifying the employers that have the commitment and capacity to hire, train (when appropriate) and advance disadvantaged workers with limited skills and work experience. CBOs applying for the JTED-SNAP pilot will be required to specify in advance their partnerships, including the employers that have agreed to work with them in preparing SNAP participants for destination and pathway occupations in one or more of the eleven targeted sectors.

Industry-Recognized Credentials

The IWIB and Illinois Pathways have identified the industry-recognized credentials in all major career pathways for the nine in-demand sectors identified through the Illinois Career Pathways Initiative. These industry-recognized credentials, including industry certifications, will be embedded where appropriate in all JTED-SNAP career pathway programs for both Category 1 and Category 2 participants. Additionally, industry-recognized credentials for the two additional in-demand sectors identified for this project, hospitality and administrative support, need to be embedded where appropriate in the career pathway programs. For example, in the Information Technology sector, career pathway programs will focus on entry-level certifications such as CompTIA A+ and Network+. For Manufacturing, CBOs will be asked to work with employers to prioritize entry-level certifications such as NCRC, MSSC, NIMS and AWS certifications. Information on the nine in-demand sectors identified in the Illinois Pathways Initiative can be found at the following link: <https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways/Pages/default.aspx>

Accelerated and Enhanced Training and Work-Based Learning

The JTED-SNAP model will improve the integration of adult education and accelerated training and work-based learning through (1) acceleration and integration of adult education and technical training which can incorporate the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB)-led Integrated Career and Academic Prep System (ICAPS) model and (2) expanded work-based learning for the unemployed with limited work experience through on-the-job training, work experience and transitional employment. Attachment E provides the JTED-SNAP Service model and ICAPS model and providers. More information on the ICAPS model can be found at this site: <http://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/AO-Program-Profiles.pdf>.

CBOs will utilize established career pathway systems including bridge programs, adult education, and career and technical education that results in industry recognized credential and/or certification. The training and certifications should lead to middle-skill jobs as identified in Attachment C, which require more than a high-school degree or equivalency, but less than a four-year degree. The Illinois Community College Board, Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) model will be utilized to help support CBOs and their Adult Education and Community College partners in implementing a JTED-SNAP pilot project. This model draws on the integration of bridge programs with adult education and career and technical learning along with supportive service to better meet the needs of ABAWDs (Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents) and other SNAP E&T participants who are unemployed, underemployed, or skill and wage deficient. Bridge Programs are instructional basic skill programs designed to upgrade skill levels of students using three elements: contextualization, career awareness/development, and transition services. The ICAPS model is a blend of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and adult education in an integrated delivery model designed to accelerate the time to complete both education and technical training. There are three models that will support the recipients’ access to high-wage and high-growth employment opportunities:

- **Model I:** In cooperation with existing adult education/English as a second language (ESL) bridge program models as identified in the Statewide Bridge Definition, provide instruction to those with reading and math levels below the 8.0 Educational Functioning Level (EFL) preparing them for the next component of training, Model II or III.
- **Model II:** This integrated model blends adult education and CTE instruction and is delivered in an accelerated team-taught format. Individuals in this model may be employed but skill deficient or long-term unemployed, who need to earn their high school equivalency certification, upgrade their basic skills, earn a community college basic certificate and/or obtain an industry recognized credentials. Engaging employers and industry representatives in a sector strategy approach is required as a concurrent work-based learning component managed by the CBO is recommended. CBO should consider cooperation with existing ICAPS community college–CTE and adult education integrated programs, which have adopted and scaled the evidence-based ICAPS integrated approach model for fully integrating adult basic education/ESL and career and technical training, including contextualized supplemental learning support for underprepared students.
- **Model III:** For SNAP recipients who are identified as employed that do not experience basic skills barriers but lacking industry related skills or credentials; or SNAP participants that have successfully completed Models I and II. Community-based organization will offer enhance short-term training opportunities to SNAP recipients in key growth industry areas through either in house training or training partners including established ICAPS. This would enable them to advance in their current employment or identify other employment opportunities. In this area, individuals may earn industry-recognized credentials. Engaging employers and industry representatives in a sector strategy approach is required. Accelerated credential attainment through evidence-based practices through prior learning assessment is an area that is being explored and has the potential of benefitting SNAP recipients. For those individuals that pursue the short-term training opportunities, community colleges have robust methodologies for ensuring prior learning credit for work experience and previous training. Further, the state of Illinois is currently engaged in the development of a statewide model for prior learning assessment from which participants in this model would undoubtedly stand to benefit. The ability to translate these short-term opportunities into college credit is a viable long-term strategy for successfully meeting the career pathway goals of participants.

The goal of each of the models is to accelerate completion of adult education content and improve completion rates of career-technical programs for targeted students, and to improve job attainment and job retention and earnings outcomes of SNAP participants.

Work-Based Learning

JTED-SNAP Pilot Project will fully integrate basic and technical skill training as well as work-based learning. Work-based learning can be in the form of OJTs, customized training, or internships, (funded by partner organizations) or subsidized work experience. Subsidized work experience is the only work-based learning that can be paid for out of the JTED-SNAP Pilot Project and is targeted to the participants that are unemployed or underemployed with limited work experience. The CBO will be responsible for developing employer relationships to establish appropriate worksites that are related to the career pathway the client is pursuing. CBOs must have the administrative and fiscal capacity to administer the program according to the program requirements and have the capability to be the Employer of Record, including the administration of a payroll system. Clients will spend approximately 10-20 hours per week in subsidized work-experience and will spend approximately 10-15 hours per week in technical skills training though the accelerated job training defined above. ***Clients cannot be required to engage in more than 120 hours cumulative of activities per month. Also earnings from work-based learning are counted to determine continued SNAP eligibility.*** Under Earnfare, SNAP E&T participants will first “work off” the SNAP benefits they received that month. The additional hours worked during the month will be paid at the prevailing or areas minimum wage rate. Participants will be eligible to work approximately 8 weeks. It is anticipated that not all participants and/or

career sectors will participate in subsidized work-experience. Accelerated training will be provided at the employer location, when feasible, depending on employer capacity and class size. Below are general worksite provisions related to the work-based learning component:

General Worksite Guidelines

The employment of SNAP participants in the JTD-SNAP Pilot Project must not occur at worksites where:

- A participant's employment would unfavorably impact current employees (a SNAP participant cannot displace all or a portion of a current employee's hours including overtime, wages, employment benefits, or promotional opportunities);
- A participant's employment would impair existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;
- A participant's employment would replace the work of employees who have experienced layoffs; and
- An employer has terminated a regular employee or otherwise reduced its workforce with the intention of replacing said employees with participants subsidized with these funds.

Worksite Agreements

All SNAP participant employment opportunities must have a signed worksite agreement.

- Each worksite agreement must contain, at a minimum, the following items for each worksite included in the agreement:
 - Worksite contact and mailing information;
 - Detailed information on the worksite such as location, working days and hours, activities, job titles, job descriptions and number of positions available under each;
 - Worksite supervisor information;
 - A detailed set of mutual terms, conditions, promises, and payments that the grantee and contractor have agreed upon; and
 - A listing of participants for each worksite along with their projected start and end date.
- Grantees must ensure that worksites adhere to current workplace safety guidelines.
- Grantees must ensure that worksites adhere to applicable federal/state wage, labor, and workers compensation laws.
- Grantees must ensure that the placement of SNAP participants at a worksite is relevant to the training career pathway.

Employment and Retention Services

Clients served under Category 1 (a) who are currently gainfully employed will receive follow-up services 30, 60 and 90 days after training has been completed to determine if there are barriers to advancement that still exist and monitor if their skill upgrade has resulted in career advancement and/or a pay upgrade. Clients served under Category 1 (b) who are employed but not working at their full capacity will receive follow-up services 30, 60 and 90 days after training has been completed to determine if there are barriers to gainful employment that still exist and monitor if their skill upgrade has resulted in increased earning, increased hours worked, career advancement or enrollment in higher education. Clients served under Category 2 will receive job search assistance to include the development of a resume, interviewing skills, establishing a LinkedIn account, assistance with online job boards, and additional soft skills training to prepare them for a "best impression". The goal will be to transition those clients in work experience positions to a full time unsubsidized position with the employer or a related sector employer; and to place clients exiting training in permanent unsubsidized employment. Those that are not retained will also have the opportunity to be referred to the local WIOA program for additional training services and placement assistance. Clients placed in employment will receive follow-up services 30, 60 and 90 days after their placement to address any existing barriers that could affect their retention. Case management and supportive services will be provided to facilitate retention for all clients served under the JTED-SNAP Pilot Project.

Screening, Assessment and Case Management

Initial screening and assessment will be completed by the local DHS office and by Commerce through Illinois workNet. These assessments will include interest, barriers and employability. This comprehensive screening and assessment conducted cooperatively by IDHS and Commerce/Illinois workNet should result in the SNAP participants being provided user-friendly information to choose programs and work opportunities consistent with the “smart choices” features of job-driven training programs. CBOs will provide eligibility criteria for participants’ acceptance into the career sector training program(s) to guide the referral process and assure the SNAP participant is strategically placed with the right CBO. Random assignment will be completed as a function of the local DHS office intake process. SNAP registrants that are randomly selected to participate in the program group will be referred to the appropriate CBO.

The JTED-SNAP pilot model will require a comprehensive case management services supported by Illinois workNet and integrated with the IDHS systems. A career plan must be established to guide the participants through a career pathway and case management services should integrate and blend resources from federal and state programs including support services such as transportation, dependent care and other services necessary to participate and be successful in the pilot project. The client flow chart of how they will move from recruitment to placement is included as Attachment F.

H. Program Performance and Evaluation

JTED-SNAP Pilot Project is a performance based grant. Grantees will earn funds based on completion of the negotiated benchmarks identified below:

- **Category 1(a)(b) – Employed But Skill/Wage Deficient (Incumbent Workers).**
 1. Enrolled in Training
 2. Competing Training
 3. Employed (1b)
 4. Employment Retention
 5. Wage/Benefit Increase, and/or increase on hours (1a)

- **Category 2 – Unemployed/Underemployed SNAP Work Registrants.**
 1. Enrolled in Training
 2. Competing Training
 3. Job Placement
 4. Employment Retention

The success of the program will be based on the outcomes of the above negotiated benchmarks along with the following criteria:

- **Category 1(a)(b) – Employed But Skill/Wage Deficient (Incumbent Workers)**
 1. Promotion
 2. Entered Higher Level of Credential Training

- **Category 2 – Unemployed/Underemployed SNAP Work Registrants**
 1. Entered Higher Level of Credential Training

Additionally there will be surveys targeted for the SNAP participants and the employer partners to evaluate the design and implementation of the JTED-SNAP Pilot Project. The national evaluation process will also require 2 surveys to be completed at 12 and 36 months.

I. Budget

Provide a line item budget of requested funds in the format provided. Provide a detailed narrative for all requested costs justifying what is being requested in relation to project needs. Be specific in fully explaining all costs to support your funding request. Unsupported costs may be reduced or eliminated. Allowable costs are those that are necessary and reasonable based on the activity(ies) contained in the Scope of Work and are justified in the Budget Narrative. Budget line items are defined below:

Training: Costs associated with providing assistance to a participant to acquire or upgrade skills to enable the participant to become employed. These costs are associated with the three training modules and must be directly related to the training benefit received by the SNAP participant whether the grantee is a certified training providers and/or an education partner(s) is providing the training. Cost can include but is not limited to instructor wages and benefits, physical cost of instruction, tuition, books, supplies, and fees related to the training.

Participant Wages: Includes compensation for services rendered limited to participant wages and benefits which includes FICA and workers compensation (Only). Participants may be placed in work experience for up to 8 weeks at a rate no less than the prevailing or areas minimum wage. The number of hours worked per week may be determined by the local provider, taking into consideration the ability for the participant to concurrently be receiving adult basic education and career and technical training, and that these individuals cannot be require to engage in more than 120 hours of activities per month. It is anticipated that not all participants and/or career sectors will participate in work experience. Participant Wages should be budgeted around 18% of the total budget or \$1,600 average cost per participant.

Supportive Services: Includes, but is not limited to, assistance with transportation, child care, dependent care, and housing that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in training and employment activities authorized under the program. Supportive services will be provided on a case by case basis and will not exceed \$500 per person. This will be expended based on need. It is anticipated that not everyone will require these services so for budgeting plan on an average cost of \$220 per client.

Career Navigators: Grant funds will support appropriate staffing (salary and benefits) for the term of the grant for Career Navigators that will provide the following services: the development of participant's career and education training plans that provides direct linkages to academic and occupational learning; barrier assessment and alleviation; employer coordination and recruitment; placement and retention; coordination of continuing education in a career pathway and other services related to the final outcome of participant placement and retention in a career or placed in higher level education opportunities.

Administration: Includes, but is not limited to, accounting; budgeting; financial and cash management; procurement and purchasing; property management; payroll; and audit costs. No more than 5% of the total funds may be budgeted and expended for project administration.

J. Project Steering Group

The JTED-SNAP pilot project will have a project steering group consisting of representatives from IDHS, Commerce, IWIB, ICCB and the participating agencies. In addition, the steering group will involve at least one representative from each of the major statewide industry-led public-private partnerships involved with Illinois Pathways. Ground level program implementation can be adjusted based on the recommendations of the steering group.

III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. Requirements

All applicants must be in compliance, or agree to comply, with the following federal and state laws and related regulations listed below and those included in the final contract:

- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Copeland "Anti-Kickback" Act (18 U.S.C. 874 and 40 U.S.C. 276c)
- Davis-Bacon Act, as amended (40 U.S.C. 276a to a-7)
- Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-333)
- Rights to Inventions Made Under a Contract or Agreement
- Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.) and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.), as amended
- Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment (31 U.S.C. 1352)
- Debarment and Suspension (E.O.s 12549 and 12689)
- Applicable State of Illinois Laws

B. Allowable Costs

Allowable costs are those that are necessary and reasonable based on the activity(ies) contained in the Scope of Work and are justified in the Budget Narrative. These are Federal funds and grantees will be held accountable to all federal rules and regulations governing the use of funds.

C. Project Reporting

Grant recipients will be responsible for the submittal of all required reports and any information requests. Required reports include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Weekly Project Updates (as requested)
- Illinois workNet reporting will be utilized and data must be entered timely for real time evaluation
- Monthly cost data reporting prescribed by the National Evaluation Team.
- Accrued expenditures must be reported monthly in the Grantee Reporting System (GRS) by the 20th calendar day of each month
- Quarterly and Final DCEO Grantee Report (DGR) and Trial Balance Report
- Audit
- Report in a format and term to be determined after consultation with USDA
- End of Project Report
- Success Stories

D. Pre-Award Survey

Applicants are subject to a Pre-Award Survey to be conducted by OET Fiscal Monitors. The survey will be completed prior to the grant being issued. The purpose of the review is to establish confidence that the organization has a sound fiscal system established and capacity to administer the program.

E. Monitoring - Fiscal and Programmatic

Organizations funded through this RFA are subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring visits and site visits by state and federal administrators, and the evaluation team. The organization must have an open door policy to allow for periodic visits to evaluate the progress of the project and provide technical assistance as needed. Worksites will be visited as part of the monitoring process, with participants and supervisors interviewed. Organizations are also expected to conduct periodic monitoring of worksite.

IV. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Submittal of Grant Application

1. All applications must be sent electronically to Department of Commerce by **5:00pm on October 28, 2015** in order to be considered for funding. Proposals must be submitted to the following email address: JTED-SNAP@illinoisworknet.com. Please note that the conditions for submittal of applications, including the deadline, may not be waived or extended regardless of any circumstances resulting in delayed delivery of your proposal. Any application received after the deadline may be considered for review at the discretion of the Department of Commerce. In such cases, the Department of Commerce will determine if there are funds available to make additional grant awards.
2. All applications must be submitted in the format prescribed by the department. A template, (Organization Name – JTED-SNAP Pilot Project Application.doc), is provided to complete the application. Instructions for completing each section are included at the end of the file. When completed, rename the document by replacing "Organization Name" with the name of the applying organization. The application must to be submitted as a Word document. The applicant certification signature page must be signed and submitted as a separate attachment, renaming the file by replacing "Organization Name" with your organizations name; this can be submitted as a PDF file. Any additional information required by the RFA that cannot be included in the application format needs to be submitted in a separate document and can be in a PDF file format. Proposals not prepared in this format may not be considered for funding.
3. All applicants must be in compliance, or agree to comply, with applicable federal and state laws and related regulations in order to be considered for an award.
4. All applicants must agree to comply with the national SNAP E & T pilot evaluation.
5. All questions regarding this opportunity MUST be submitted to: https://www2.illinoisworknet.com/partners/JTED-SNAP/Pages/JTED-SNAP_FAQ.aspx
6. Agency Contact:

Tammy Stone
500 East Monroe Street, 10th floor
Springfield, Illinois 62701
Tammy.stone@illinois.gov

B. Application Format

Required Sections of Application -- Read the instructions in the application document for an explanation of the requirements for each Section:

Section 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION
Section 2: APPLICANT HISTORY
Section 3: PROPOSAL INFORMATION
Section 4: SCOPE OF WORK
Section 5: PERFORMANCE MEASURES
Section 6: PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT IMPACT
Section 7: BUDGET
Section 8: PROGRAM SPECIFIC INFORMATION
Section 9: APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

Required Attachments:

- Copy of the organization's not-for-profit approval letter
- IRS Taxpayer Identification Number W-9 Form
- Cost Allocation Plan
- List of Board of Directors
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Partner Employers
- MOU with Partner Training Providers
- MOU with Local DHS office
- Any additional attachment you feel will benefit your application

C. Application Orientation

Application Orientation meetings have been scheduled and below are details regarding the meetings. Registration is required and you can register at this site. <http://ited-snap-app-on-site.eventbrite.com>.

Site: Springfield
Center for Workforce Development
Southern Illinois University
2450 Foundation Drive, Suite 100
Springfield, IL 62703-5464
Located on the Lincoln Land Community College Campus
Date: September 23, 2015
Time: 10:00am – 3:00pm

Site: Chicago
Blandic Building
160 N LaSalle Blvd
Room C-500 on the 5th floor
Chicago, IL 60601
Date: September 24, 2015
Time: 10:00am – 3:00pm

Webinar:

Date: September 29, 2015

Time: 10:00am and repeated at 2:00pm

You will need to register for the webinar at the below site.

<http://jted-snap-app-webinar.eventbrite.com>

You will receive a link to the webinar after registration.

V. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

The Applications will be reviewed by an intra-agencies team of reviewers. Decisions to award grants and the funding levels will be determined based upon compliance with the requirements of this RFA and the quality of the application responses. The review team will make funding recommendations to the Director of DHS and Commerce. The Director's will make all final funding decisions. The team will judge each application based on the following criteria:

Applicant Information/Capacity (35% of the Qualitative Evaluation)

Review team will examine if the applicant has the capacity to successfully complete the project tasks within the proposed grant period. Evaluators will consider:

- Prior experience of the community-based provider serving low-wage, low-skilled workers and unemployed disadvantaged individuals including welfare recipients.
- The related experience of the applicant, sub-contractors, and partners.
- The applicant's previous performance in administering similar projects.
- The qualifications of the applicant staff to be assigned to the project.
- If the applicant already has a relationship with Commerce or IDHS whether they are they currently in good standing.
- Letters of support included from targeted sector representatives such as Industry Associations, Councils, Local Economic Development Organizations and local workforce boards
- Priority will be given to applicants that have an established working relationship with the Local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity System.

Quality of the Workplan (45% of the Qualitative Evaluation)

Review team will examine the overall quality of the project proposed by the applicant. In making this judgment, the review team will consider the factors listed below:

- The level of participation of local employers, the Department will give additional points for employer partnership agreements that demonstrate a quality relationship with commitment to the training process and to job placement and advancement of trained participants.
- Strength of training partnerships (if applicable).
- Strength of partnerships with the WIOA system, the local DHS office, other social service providers and industry sector representatives.
- Quality and detail of the training program offered, it must include a plan for training entry and exit plan.
- Occupations have been targeted in industries that are experiencing a demand for skilled employees and that will lead to gainful employment and to career path opportunities for the participants. The Department will give additional points to projects that provide training in regionally identified demand occupations.
- Uniqueness and innovation in administering the project.
- Priority will be given to applicants that include Bridge Programs in their program design.
- Priority will be given to applicants that have leveraged funds that can be blended to support the project for efficiency and sustainability.

- Priority will be given to applicants that demonstrate a structured support system to engage and maintain participants in the training program through wrap around services to alleviate barriers, mentoring, peer exchange groups, etc.

Cost and Outcomes (20% of the Qualitative Evaluation)

Review team will examine the reasonableness of costs relative to the type of expenses being proposed and the proposed outcomes. Review team will also consider the amount of match funding provided by the applicant:

- Justifiable and reasonable costs in relation to the proposed activities and number of participants served.
- Demonstration of collaboration with other social service program and federal and state funded programs and employers that can assist financial or in-kind with training and barrier alleviation.
- Reasonable number of SNAP participants planned to be served over the two year period. Attachment G provides the projected number of SNAP participants to be entered in the program group.

The Department of Commerce/IDHS, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to reject all Applications; to reject individual Applications for failure to meet any requirement; to award in part or total; and to waive minor defects and non-compliance. Submission of an Application confers no right to an award or to a subsequent grant agreement. All decisions of the Department of Commerce/IDHS are final.